



The
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BAPTIST MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP



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EDITORIAL

ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS

IT is the privilege of those responsible for our B.M.F. to be brought right up against many lovely deeds of good report, often unreported.

There is, for instance, the voluntary principle upon which the Fellowship is organised. How many kinds of service it fathers and fosters may be seen in the list of Secretaries, not one of whom receives a penny for the work, cheerfully discharged. There is the Magazine. Writers, editors, correspondents, are unpaid, and we venture a guess that the printer, at the price charged, makes very little out of it. We wonder how many journals are similarly produced? In these days of the Welfare State many institutions which formerly could proudly claim to be "supported by voluntary contributions" can no longer make that boast—with a resulting moral loss to the community.

Our Treasurer, moreover, is cheered by repeated experiences of the receipt from individuals or Fraternals, contributions, exceeding the minimum subscription. More than likely, there is an element of unselfishness on the part of those who pay for advertisement space in our pages. These facts taken together make the continuation of our Magazine possible.

Furthermore, and to come to the point of this Editorial, we are grateful for the many who entrust to our distribution, generous gifts, nearly always accompanied by the command that no names are to be mentioned. Here is a letter from U.S.A. enclosing, in renewal of a subscription, a ten dollar note, the balance being placed at our disposal. Here is a cheque for £5—it has come as an annual gift. A brother minister, strictly anonymous, sends £25 and adds—"My hope is that other men who are better off financially than their brethren, will take the hint and follow my example, so that the Benevolent Fund may become a real stand-by to those in special need."

The intention of this Editorial is not to blazon forth the urgent needs of many ministerial brethren whether on the active or retired list, although we could a tale unfold. We would, however, point the moral, for those who have a heart to discern, while for any who, having eyes, see not, we would bid them consider what Saint Paul saith, in his Fraternal communication written for the members of the Baptist Church in Galatia, chapter 6, verse 2. Verb. sap.!

EVANGELISM THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

IN the evangelism of the apostolic age there were two main elements—the proclamation of the message of Christ crucified and risen, and the confirmation of that message “by the signs that attended it” (Mark xvi, 20). Much attention has been given in recent years to “the Apostolic preaching,” but have we not tended to overlook the second element in effective evangelism? Do we not often tend to assume that evangelism is just speaking, testifying, preaching, proclaiming the message? Where this assumption is made our chief concern will be with the message and the difficult problem of communicating it. But there is a deeper problem—why should people listen to our message, especially in view of the widespread failure of the Church? Can we expect people to listen to a message unless it is confirmed by facts attending it? The ministry of the Lord Jesus was “mighty in deed and word” and the great Apostle won “obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. xv, 18, 19). Effective evangelism is the verbal proclamation of the good news, confirmed by facts. The prayer of the Apostles is, “Grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus” (Acts iv, 29, 30).

Now it is not proposed here to discuss the work of Divine healing, or to refer to other signs which attended the proclamation of the gospel in the apostolic age. We shall rather confine ourselves to the sign accompanying the word from Pentecost onwards. For when Peter proclaimed the message of Christ crucified and risen on the Day of Pentecost, he drew attention to the fact confirming his message—“this which you see and hear” (ii, 33)—the presence of the Holy Spirit in the fellowship. The fellowship created and indwelt by the Holy Spirit is the confirmation of the truth of the gospel message. “It was not as a disembodied truth uttered into the air that the Christian ‘Good News’ laid hold of men; it was through the corporate life of the little Christian societies in the cities of the ancient world. The life and spirit of these societies was indeed what it was because amongst them the Christian Good News was believed, but it was the life and spirit which gave the Good News its power. Men coming into contact with such a group felt an atmosphere unlike anything else. Each little group was a centre of attraction which drew men in from the surrounding world. In that way, probably, more than by the preaching of any few individuals, the Church grew” (*Christianity*—Edwyn Bevan). The gospel is given power when men and women can see the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ about which they hear in the message, embodied in the fellowship created by the Holy Spirit. This means that we should aim at speaking the message

in the setting of, and not apart from, real fellowship. People should experience the love of Jesus in that very situation in which they are told about Him. Evangelism should take place through fellowship. Let us look at four applications of this principle.

I. The *home* or *family* is the basic unit of the Christian Fellowship, and through the practice of *hospitality* in the home, outsiders can be brought to know the reality of the love of Christ. This is the most simple and most natural way of bridging the gulf between Christians and "them that are without," and of forging those close personal relationships upon which evangelism depends. For our first problem in evangelism is not the outsider but the lack of friendliness and real love in Christians. A factory chaplain of wide experience said recently, "I come more and more to see that one great weakness of those who are Christians is their aloofness from the non-Christians." The great change will come when we repent of this aloofness and open wide our hearts and our homes. If we can encourage every family within the local church to practise hospitality in the home not merely to their own friends or fellow-Christians, but also to non-Christians, then that "great gulf fixed" between believers and unbelievers will be bridged. The best place to get to know people is in the home—it is also the easiest place for the outsider to enter. It is hard to get unbelievers into churches, it is easy to get them into homes. When Matthew wished to introduce his tax collector friends to the Saviour, he did not invite them to the synagogue, but to the home (Matt. ix, 10). It is the obvious thing to do. It is no exaggeration to say that if every Christian home was hospitable, the first part of the task of evangelism—that of establishing effective contact or relationship with outsiders—would be done.

II. The *house-group* or *cell*, which grows out of the practice of hospitality, is a further attempt to win people to discipleship within the context of fellowship. Instead of attempting to win people individually first, and then attempting to get them within the Fellowship—the process is reversed. In the house-group they experience the reality of fellowship first and thus encounter the Risen Lord perhaps before they hear about Him. In our own Church we have twelve such house-groups, four for men and eight for women. There are between twenty and thirty people in each group. As far as possible we attempt to get an equal number of Christians and "outsiders" in each group, as the chief purpose is the forging of personal relationships or bridge-building. These groups meet once a fortnight in the homes (in alternation) of the people constituting the group. No direct attempt is made to evangelise the people within the group, and so the talks and discussions are not necessarily "religious." The function of such a group is pre-evangelism through friendship, hospitality and teaching. Evangelism follows through personal work and the gospel message within the local Church into which the house-group

is a bridge. Of the 250 or so people in these groups well over half are outsiders, brought into the homes by the personal invitation of the Christians. It is not the least bit difficult to get non-Christians into these groups, which could be expanded indefinitely if we had sufficient leaders. A considerable number of people have come to discipleship and baptism through the work of these groups.

III. The principle of evangelism through fellowship also has an important bearing upon the *worship* of the local church. It is by no means sufficient to preach the gospel. If the unbeliever is to be won the message must be proclaimed by the whole fellowship, and within what is manifestly a real fellowship. The whole fellowship should be encouraged to pray with the minister in the preparation of the word and during the delivery. The whole church must preach even though one member of it utters the word. The converting power of the gospel preached within a praying fellowship is awe-inspiring. If our worship is to have that effect upon the unbeliever described in 1 Corinthians xiv, 24 and 25, it must be not only evangelical but corporate—manifestly a fellowship at worship. This applies especially to the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, which are not merely individual acts of piety or witness, but sacraments of the whole Body. The converting power of Baptism accompanied by the proclamation of the gospel and administered within a praying fellowship is well known to us all. But this is no less true of the Lord's Supper, and Susanna Wesley was neither the first nor the last person to be converted at the Table of the Lord. Of course unbelievers may not partake of the Holy Supper, but are we right in discouraging them from witnessing it? For this is at once the evangelistic service, and the fellowship meal. Here supremely the Lord's death is proclaimed in word and action within the fellowship, partaking of the same loaf and the same cup. Here before the eyes of believers and unbelievers alike, Jesus Christ may be publicly portrayed as crucified. At present too little attention is given to the activity of the Fellowship in worship, which all too easily degenerates into a ministerial monologue. We need the equivalent of the primitive *Agape* if our worship is to be the act and action of the whole Fellowship.

IV. Evangelism through fellowship has also important implications for the *ministry* of the local church. The principle of the Body, of the gospel message embodied and confirmed in corporate life, must be exhibited in the ministry itself. A one-man ministry is not a confirmation but a denial of the nature of the gospel. The supreme instrument of evangelism, the ministry of the local church, must itself be a team, a cell, a living demonstration of the gospel. The pastor, the elders, the deacons, together with all who hold office or exercise a charismatic ministry, must seek to live in a sharing fellowship, and in prayer and action tackle the task of evangelism together. It is not enough to discuss it

together—we must also do it together. But quite apart from doing, where the local ministry is a real fellowship, where pastor, elders, deacons and workers know one another in Christ, care for one another and love one another—the very existence of such a cell at the centre of the local church, is a sign confirming the word.

The four applications here made of the principle of evangelism in the context of fellowship are, of course, only selections. It has important bearings upon youth work and other aspects of the life of the local church. Many and various are the applications, but the principle is the same—namely, that in this post-Christian civilisation merely speaking the message is often futile. We must demonstrate it in our personal relationships. “Ultimately the evidence for the credibility of the gospel in the eyes of the world, must be a quality of life manifested in the Church which the world cannot find elsewhere” (the Report, “Towards the Conversion of England”). It is not just the word, but the word confirmed by love which leads to salvation. Many could say with Augustine, “I did not care a straw for it (i.e. the preaching of the gospel) . . . but I began to love him (Ambrose, the preacher) not at first as a teacher of the truth, which I despaired of finding in Thy Church, but as a fellow-creature who was kind to me.” As two missionaries from Papua put it, “The natives do not understand our theology, but they understand our loving-kindness and let themselves be won by it.” The natives of England do not understand our theology and are mostly indifferent to our gospel; but they still understand the language of loving-kindness and let themselves be won by it. Let us then show them the reality of love embodied in the Fellowship, first, and tell them the message afterwards. That is the principle of evangelism through fellowship.

S. F. WINWARD.

THE BAPTIST UNION AND THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

THE best Baptist Union that Baptists have so far made is the B.M.S. They do not find it easy to unite. In all their unions there is always a measure of reserve, a certain tension between the right of self-determination and the claims of the common life, a fear of going too far. And the difficulty is not one merely of temperament but of principle, for it is with the autonomous Church as with the sovereign State. The surrender of sovereignty is never easy: and the question is not just—can it be surrendered? but—should it be? So sovereign States find it easy to mingle but hard to merge. And so it is with Baptist Unions. They never make an omelette. The constituent parts never come out of their shells.

The completest Union so far is the B.M.S. In this case they were confronted by a task that could be done only by collective

action. There was nothing for it but to discard their separateness and create an instrument of common life in which they could act as one. And the organisation thus created has done its work admirably.

It links its varied and even heterogeneous parts together with a network of contacts that works like a nervous system. Its rule over them is that of a benevolent dictatorship. Its call for sacrifice is never in vain. It takes for its service from amongst our young people the choicest and best. Into its treasury there flows from every corner of the land a constant stream of gifts. When there is a deficit it tells the churches to go through their pockets again. And Baptists, thus regimented, kiss their chains and bend their necks to the yoke.

And how good it has been for them. For what is the pitiful freedom of isolation compared with the real thing that can be realised only in community. For this alone our debt to the B.M.S. is immeasurable. It has taken us out of ourselves. It has been to us what the sea has been to England. It has lured us from the parish pump and made us citizens of the world. It has given a world-view to Bethels in back streets. It has put the out-of-the-way hamlet on the map, for the tiny light of its Gospel witness was being watched by eager eyes in distant lands. It has saved the self-respect of aided churches, though this has been possible only through the illogical but wise co-operation of the home-administration, which has always refused to accept the view that an aided church was by definition one that was too poor to give anything away. It has sought to lift it above that level of poverty. It has given to enable it to give, and so to keep its soul alive.

So we thank God for the B.M.S. It is a real sorrow to many of us that our work has confined us so much to the home side. We know something of what we have missed and we envy those who have had the opportunity and the capacity to participate in both. But it is just this participation in both that ought to be possible for us all on a far wider scale, and if that is what comes of the changes that are imminent in our denominational life, it will be a sign that we are moving in the right direction.

Turning now to our work at home, it would not be true to say that it has meant less to Baptists than the work abroad. They have always realised it to be the same task, but they have felt it to be no less axiomatic that the two parts of the same task had to be tackled in different ways. Abroad there was nothing for it but collective action. At home what was needed was something nearer individual enterprise. It was a case of local churches, sometimes alone, sometimes in partnership, pushing out into likely places in their vicinity and propagating their species like strawberry plants, without having to be directed by central committees or spoon-fed by central funds. And their view of the matter accorded with the political philosophy of the time. It was an age of individual enterprise and economic conflict—a hard,

and often cruel, but heroic age that had its glories as well as its tragedies.

And there are similar glories and tragedies in our own story of church expansion. Many of our churches were built with bleeding hands—a triumph of faith and courage. But not all. Some were illegitimate. Of one of these I have heard it said, “It was born in pride and will never prosper.”

Denominational action was at that time not unlike governmental action. It interfered as little as possible. It served the local church and kept it in the fighting line. It brought up the ambulance for broken churches and ministers. From this minor role it has gone on, under the pressure of new needs and modern ideas, to make itself responsible for activities that the local church is quite incapable of doing for itself. Such is the provision and care of the ministry. Such, too, our impact on the national life and our participation in ecumenical affairs. And such, too, in an ever-increasing degree, is the work of evangelism under modern conditions.

In church extension, the strawberry principle of propagation, though still in use, is in many situations quite obsolete. The new planned housing area has no place for the slow growth of struggling, competitive churches. What is essential if we are to go in at all is the provision of site, building and ministry before there is a church. It is like putting up a nesting-box in the garden for occupants that have not yet arrived.

It is just such a situation in our own country as that which confronted the denomination abroad a hundred and fifty years ago and to which the B.M.S. was the answer. To-day the B.U., confronting the same situation here, is not the answer. It was never designed to undertake collective action on such a scale. Nothing like the advance in our homeland that is urgently needed if we are to survive, is being undertaken, or can be undertaken as things are, because the B.U. has a very different function in the life of the denomination from that of the B.M.S. It faces the greatest spiritual need with well-nigh empty hands. The Baptists of this country are asking their Union to make the bricks of to-morrow's churches without straw.

Whatever may be the shape of things to come it is plain that in some way and to some extent the mantle of the B.M.S. must fall upon the B.U. We must learn to look at it and feel about it in a new way. The mere mention of a B.M.S. deficit has set going a great searching of hearts and pockets throughout the whole of Baptist England. It will be a new thing if the B.U. deficit, looming more and more menacingly, does not leave these same hearts and pockets unsearched. It is perfectly obvious that we cannot go on like this. We need another Carey with another *Enquiry* and another cry, “Is nothing going to be done?”—this time for the unevangelised at our doors.

The only practical proposal at the moment for dealing with the problem is that the B.U. should take a leaf out of the B.M.S.'s book. We have now a large, new, central committee. The provinces are being brought nearer London and to each other. A process of integration is afoot. We are striving for closer union. And we are overhauling our propaganda. We are to have more of it and better. Improved salesmanship is to sell the home product, and the B.U. and the B.M.S. are to grow in beauty side by side.

But is our problem capable of so simple a solution? How are we to get this new propaganda? It has to be picturesque. It has to touch the heart and kindle the imagination. It has to make the work at home as fascinating as the work abroad.

But is it? At home we have no medical missions. We have no thrilling stories beginning with the words, "The doctor comes." We have no schools; no languages to translate; no illiteracy to overcome. In these days there is hardly any poverty left to fight. The romantic figure of the deaconess with her veil, as a sister of mercy bringing succour to the haunts of want and woe, has been replaced by a woman minister who, though an excellent person, is nothing like as useful to the propagandist as her predecessor.

In our modern world we are deprived of the age-old advantages of being both preachers and philanthropists. We are not allowed to offer anything but the naked Word: and these stern and novel circumstances add greatly to the difficulties both of preaching and propaganda. St. Francis owes much to that leper he embraced. Kipling points to an oak-wood and says:—

"O, that was where they hewed the keels
That rolled to Trafalgar."

Our spiritual Trafalgars of to-morrow are doubtless being won now in young oaks of Christian character that are being grown in out of the way places by unnoticed country ministers, but it isn't the kind of activity that makes good copy for the press.

No. In the field of propaganda it will not be easy for the cleverest of us to compete with the B.M.S. And isn't there something wrong in the very thought of it?

"They made me keeper of the vineyards,
But mine own vineyard have I not kept."

The B.U. and the B.M.S. are doubtless in for a long period of mutual readjustment which cannot and ought not to be hurried. But it is hard to see how the denomination can fulfil its God-given task of evangelisation in the homeland in an increasingly desperate situation, while it goes on thinking that you start dealing with missions only when you take the Tube from Holborn to Baker Street. The time has come for this great denomination to take the other chicken under its wing.

J. C. RENDALL.

SUPERANNUATION OR ASSURANCE ?

MUCH has been written about the minimum stipend and the hardships involved in the present low level and the high cost of living. There are other aspects of this situation which cause equal concern to the younger ministers and one of these is the matter of insurance. Many of us believe that the Superannuation Scheme could be substantially bettered. Let us, therefore, consider some alternative schemes and see if they can offer any guidance as to the weaknesses of our denominational fund.

An Endowment Policy payable at death or at the age of retirement has considerable advantages in that it covers not only superannuation but the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." A comprehensive scheme of this nature seems preferable as it makes provision for many contingencies in addition to providing an adequate sum for retirement.

One such policy offered by a reputable insurance company has premiums commencing at the age of 25 of £2 16s. 5d. per cent. per annum. Working on the superannuation premium based on the minimum stipend plus children's allowance this means that the young minister could insure himself for a sum of £600 for the amount which he covenants to pay annually under the Superannuation Scheme. Compound bonuses at 32s. per cent. per annum are payable with the sum assured so that at the age of 65 a total amount of £1,090 is available. This would purchase an annuity for himself of about £100 or for his wife of about £85.

Let us now look at the more extreme cases; after all, it is these against which we desire to insure ourselves. It is here also, I believe, that the main weakness of the denominational fund is to be found. Supposing a minister's wife dies at the age of 40, leaving him with two young children. He himself dies at 50 and the elder child is then 19 and at the University, the younger is 16 and at Secondary School. What contribution does the Superannuation Fund make to offset the £870 provided by the endowment policy for the member's dependents? In point of fact the Fund is not bound to do anything because the children are not below the age of 16 and not, therefore, "dependents." It is very likely that an "ex gratia" refund of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of stipend paid by the member over the last twenty-five years will be granted on application. But note it is only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—despite the fact that the Fund has received 5 per cent. for which the member was legally responsible. This payment may amount to £200—£300. Most of us facing such circumstances would be comforted to know that the additional security would enable our children to finish their education without monetary worries.

It may be said that we could think up other exceptional cases which would show the Superannuation Fund in a better light. Well, let us suppose, then, that the member died at 50, leaving

a widow of 45 and two children below the age of 16. Under an endowment policy she would receive a sum which would be comparable to the provisions made under the Superannuation Scheme for a period of about twenty years, whereas her life expectation might be another 10-15 years beyond this. But ask a widow of 45 (or under) which she would prefer—£52 10s. per year for life or a capital sum of £870? Most, I believe, would choose the capital sum. Ministers don't usually leave sufficient personal possessions for their widows to set up a home and launch out on earning their own livelihood, and that is usually the course which circumstances indicate.

Let us turn, however, to another case in which the balance is restored by the "brotherhood" conception of the Fund. One wise provision arising from this fellow concern is that which governs the case of a member's total incapacity for remunerative employment after ten years' participation in the Fund. Such a member may claim the benefits of this scheme, viz. an annuity for the remainder of his life and grants in respect of children under 16, if applicable, with the knowledge that if his wife survives him she will receive a widow's annuity. This is a real brotherly provision and one which, as far as I know, cannot be equalled elsewhere. The corresponding provision under an endowment assurance described in the conditions as "particularly generous" is that the policy is made paid-up for a reduced sum assured to which is added existing bonuses which at the end of ten years would amount to about £250.

The inadequacies of the denominational fund are not to be found, therefore, in the provisions for total incapacitation but in the fact that these generous provisions are not extended to cover the premature death of the member. I believe that many younger ministers would prefer a system which gave the option of a lump sum payable to the dependents on death of the member before the age of retirement. Moreover, some of the conditional clauses concerning dependents are open to question in the Superannuation Scheme. The age limit of 16 for a child is an arbitrary one in these days of further education, so is the provision concerning a young widow. When a member covenants to pay 5 per cent. of his stipend he does so to secure the future, not particularly for himself but for his dependents. These conditional clauses and the absence of any provision for capital payments militate against this desire. Many men, because of what they regard as these "weaknesses" in the Fund, are compelled to take out insurance policies to safeguard adequately their dependents. "My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

I realise that this is a "Superannuation" Fund and that what has been written may sound like an attempt to undermine its basic structure. My contention is that we need an over-all insurance which will cover the needs of dependents better than does the present system. Most young Baptist ministers cannot afford to

pay superannuation and insurance premiums. Are they, then, to turn aside from the Fund to other over-all policies? Some, I know, would gladly do so if their Churches would make contributions to such premiums on a similar scale to those they now make to the Superannuation Fund. Surely the fact that there is such a feeling is a condemnation of the inadequacy of our denominational provisions?

I would earnestly suggest, therefore, that the lines along which many ministers would welcome the extension of benefits are those suggested above; namely, the option of an assured sum payable on the premature death of a member, this sum to be comparable with the purchase sum of the widow's annuity in the case of her survival and equal to a refund of the 5 per cent. of stipend paid by the member or on his behalf plus compound interest at an agreed rate when the sole dependents are children under the age of 18. Such improvements would be a natural development of the fellowship underlying the present provisions and by providing adequate coverage for exceptional circumstances would reduce the expenses of many ministers and thus be the means of removing hardship which bears particularly upon the younger family man.

R. E. MAYCOCK.

* * *

Comments by B. Grey Griffith

The Editors have allowed me to see the foregoing able article by Mr. Maycock. It will be full of interest to us all. It is good that some of our brethren are thinking on these matters.

It appears that Mr. Maycock proceeds upon two assumptions. One is that the churches will accept responsibility within the proposals he sets forth (remembering that a minister moves from one sphere to another) as they have done in the Superannuation Fund because it is sponsored by the Baptist Union. The second is that it will be to the general advantage to have an option of a lump sum in lieu of an annuity. I doubt whether either of these assumptions would be acceptable to our churches.

Now to take the particular case with the figures given. We do not doubt the accuracy of the figures. Mr. Maycock instances a minister of twenty-five years of age and a wife of the same age. As a matter of fact the age of entry of the minister is much older. In 1951, I am informed, the age was thirty-two years. This would make a big difference in the figures.

Then he assumes the same age of man and wife. He makes no allowance for disparity, which would affect the amount of annuity. The Superannuation Fund allows for a disparity of fifteen years without penalty.

Once again the instance he quotes is an annuity for a minister or for his widow. The figures would be different if there was a joint risk, as there is in the Superannuation Fund.

Mr. Maycock makes generous reference to the cases of those incapacitated. In 1951 we had three such cases, and one was peculiar in that the minister recovered. If he had taken a lump sum there would have been difficulty. As it was, the doctors later certified him as fit, and he has now accepted another pastorate.

The strength of Mr. Maycock's article lies in the little or no provision for the children. He has really answered this by noting that the Fund is a Superannuation Fund. I have not known of any such case as he instances.

Taking into consideration all the risks and the achieved good will of the Denomination, including the general readiness of the churches to pay the half share, the Fund serves our ministers better than any other scheme.

Of course the higher paid minister would be better off, apart from the risk of incapacitation, if he took out an insurance policy, if the church continued to pay the present half share, and if the minister could always be sure that his stipend would remain at a high level. We owe much to those ministers and churches, who, being well off, are in the scheme for the benefit of their brethren.

THE PRESENT ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

UNLESS one is in the position to conduct the sort of statistical enquiry, such as that carried out by Mass Observation, etc., it is doubtful if anything useful can be written about the present attitude of students to the Christian Faith, without destroying one's objective by indulging in irresponsible generalisation. But since it is at least to some extent true to say that the student expresses with more sophistication and self-consciousness the attitudes characteristic of the wider community, those who require such a survey may draw their inferences from works of social analysis (e.g. *Puzzled People*, *English Life and Leisure*). The student community does, however, tend to generate distinctive attitudes to Christian Faith, and offers illuminating examples of the opportunities and difficulties of communicating that Faith. With this in mind, I shall restrict myself to an impressionistic characterisation of the attitudes which have confronted me during the last five years of studying with and working amongst students.

The average student to-day seems to be primarily interested in one thing, namely, passing examinations, as the most important step in his career. One of the results of this is that the universal questions are thrust out on to the fringes of interest and an approach on the question of Christian Faith is met by the response, "I haven't time!"; and this is often the case. Nevertheless, as a response, it as often conceals the feeling that the Church is a remote institution promoted by complacent bourgeois self-glorification, or a useful repository of social conventions which serve to restrain

the more irresponsible members of society; an institution, at any rate, whose jingle of jargon is not worth deciphering when there are more important and more pleasant things to do. It is not the case that this student entertains any serious doubts about the truth of Christian belief; he feels that if people catch that sort of thing they may as well nurse it; but he hasn't caught it. Christian Faith is a matter of taste. The student for whom the sensuous or aesthetic experience provides the source of values will not consider the Faith unless it can be shown to be a respectable thing to do. The problem he exemplifies is not that of the infidel whose intellect prevents belief, but that of the aesthete for whom the scandal of Faith is too much to bear.

Among those who register real concern about the Faith, the language of the Church often has the effect of an unintelligible monologue. Ritualistic accessories, and assistance invoked from methods of sensational publicity stunts arouse only suspicion where they are not a welcome diversion from the boredom of having to listen. This type of attitude is deeply rooted in a cultural soil saturated by the assumptions and mythology of the sciences, and fertilised by the hopes of nature and society governed by uninhibited reason. It is a highly complex growth manifesting itself in a great variety of ways, and requires delicate handling. If Christian Faith can be shown to be vitally related to a going concern (e.g. politics), interest is captured. But there is often a genuine inability to understand a word the Christian has to say about his Faith. Even where there is a grasp of meaning, it is too often relaxed by a failure to meet honest perplexity. The familiar question, "How can you prove that what you say is true?" cannot be met as easily as some Christians suggest by their answers. When a student says: "I can understand what counts as evidence for the truth of the statement, 'there are four of us in this room,'" and asks, "What counts as evidence for the truth of the statement, 'where two or three are met in Christ's Name, there He is in the midst'?" he reflects a universe of discourse which needs to be patiently understood, and honestly faced. It exposes assertions made by Christians to so many qualifications that any significance they may have appeared to possess is evaporated. Where this may leave the believer bewildered but complacent, it leaves the seeker terrified.

Students who make a profession of Christian Faith encounter these attitudes daily, but their varying reaction to them leads one to consider whether or not this has any bearing on their own attitude to the Faith. Some appear to be content to think of their Christian Faith as something private and incommunicable (and, therefore, scarcely Christian), for they never engage in any serious attempt to convey it to their fellow students; and if they adhere to any of the religious societies in the University, it is in order to "maintain the glow" of denominational life or of some particular theological standpoint. Others do engage in evangelism, but of the sort which

treats the Gospel as if it were a monologue requiring only adjustments to the most accommodating logic, and to be weighted with the authority which appeals most to the "student mind." The task of communication, it seems, is left entirely to divine catastrophic intervention, though one suspects that there is a belief that if the monologue can be made to sound the respectable thing to adopt, it will be accepted and in turn repeated. An extreme example of this type of attitude is found among those whose labour to render the Gospel intellectually respectable never appears to envisage conversion, and would be positively embarrassed by such an event. Very few students who have lived beyond the influence of the Church are aroused or even reached by this activity, and the reason seems obvious. Fewer still live their student lives as Christians in a real attempt to meet the utter pagan, but those who do so treat the Faith as a conversation between God and man, and man and man. Their aim appears to be to engage in responsible dialogue with their fellow students at the frontiers of faith and unbelief. The boundaries which lie between the various traditions of worship in the Church is the point at which a real encounter with fellow students committed to Christ takes place; and the barriers which sever men from their fellow-men—economic, racial and religious—are the enemy positions which the power of Christ is invoked to destroy. They leave themselves open to all the criticisms which pioneers and missionaries of all ages have endured, but one cannot help rejoicing in this creative minority.

The general impression one gains is that both students who profess to be Christians, and those who disown the name, have no real concern for the Christian Faith. Hence a student who has had a small dose of potted Positivism can dismiss the whole issue in a sentence, and the believer sits in complacent self-intrenchment, apparently unconcerned about the quality of his opponent's weapons. There appears to be an almost total absence of the intellectual integrity which is born of a passion for truth, though the thoroughness of the work of specialists cannot be denied. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how such passionate integrity can grow in an atmosphere in which the suburban virtues alone can flourish. We are familiar with these in the way that many people think of Christian Faith. It must be such as has a suitably high privet hedge about it; the neighbour must not hear about it at all costs. Moderation in all things, including truth, and even this needs to be canned so that it can be carried about conveniently by the consumer. The startling feature of the life of the University to-day is that it has become thoroughly infected by the suburban mentality. God's love and judgment alone can melt down this chromium plated counterfeit of the search for God in all things!

In the light of His love and judgment, we must act in humble obedience to the demands made upon us day to day, and I should like to conclude this article by giving some indication of the way in which the demands being made upon the life of the Church

may be met. One path is clear ! That is to bring constant pressure to bear on the University as an institution so that it makes it possible; indeed, so that it promotes the asking of universal questions. It is here that the Faculties of Theology can perform a task that takes it beyond the "turning out of parsons" and provides a more adequate justification for its existence. A series of inter-faculty lectures can do a great deal to draw students out of their insular existence, and provoke thought; it serves also to bring the theological student out of his multilingual purgatory into close and responsible contact with the people to whom he must minister in later life.

The pressing call to Evangelism compels a serious concern with the place of religious societies in the College and University. The multiplication of these in the recent growth of denominational societies does give some hope of maintaining denominational loyalties among students who leave the churches to go to college. But it is important that we consider the effect upon the student world. If it is true to say that a divided Church has no message for a divided world, is it less true to say that the life of the Church as represented by denominational mushrooms has no message for a departmentalised, an atomised University? In this same connection, ministers in University areas need to ask themselves sincerely whether the encouragement given to students to teach Sunday School classes, etc., is not a severe distraction from what is already a claim upon study time, viz. evangelism amongst students. On the other hand, it is vital that the Churches make ample provision for students to attend regularly upon the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, so that nourished and strengthened they can return to the community in which they have been called to witness for three or four years.

In virtue of his total commitment to God, the Christian student is constantly called upon to venture beyond the frontiers of those familiar areas of doctrines and beliefs in which he has been brought up. The fruit of this adventurous spirit in the past is to be seen throughout the leadership of the Church to-day, and it would be a disastrous thing to sacrifice it to the smug comfort of a fleeting security. But a real preparation is necessary if the adventure is to hold the promise of fuller fruit. Here the home Church can give invaluable help to the student by giving him information about the various opportunities of living within the fellowship of Christian students, and by putting him into touch with the life of the Church at his University centre.

Finally, there is a tremendous need for Christians within the University to reconsider their whole approach to their fellow students. Their task is one of mediation, of mediating the mystery of God to the understanding of man; a perennial task, perhaps, and one that covers a region wider than that of the University and college. But given the present structure of University life, and given the atmosphere whose temperature I have tried to estimate,

the task takes on a more specific shape. The student of to-day needs to be shaken out of his despair for a world of war and depression, out of his self-pity at being thrown into this pandemonium of his parents' making. He needs to be aroused to real concern for the truth about the world. He needs some assurance that such concern is worth while; that his life is meaningful. And all this calls for resolute and decisive action on the part of Christians; no half-hearted adherence to past methods of evangelism will catch his notice. The Christian must act as never before in faith, hope and love.

JOHN E. OLFORD.

THE WORSHIPPER AND PUBLIC WORSHIP

AFTER thirty-six years with few Sundays out of the pulpit it has fallen to my lot to spend two years in the pew. I have worshipped in a variety of churches and listened to a succession of ministers. To sit regularly at the "receiving end" of worship has proved an enlightening experience. Some of the things I have learned may be useful to others. In what follows I fear I shall not be able to avoid the personal pronoun, nor to obey the apostolic injunction to shun controversy. If weaknesses are stressed it is not that I am unmindful of our difficulties, or ungrateful for the inspiration so often received.

The purpose of public worship is to meet with God in the company of fellow believers, to pray to Him, to learn more of Him and His will, and to be strengthened for His service. How far are our forms of worship achieving these ends?

The Hymns

I had long thought we used too many hymns in our services. I find I was wrong. Hymns have taken on a new value. This is partly because they deepen one's sense of unity with one's fellow-worshippers. They are almost the only thing we do all together. Moreover, there is no need now during the singing of the hymn to find the place of the next Lesson, to survey the congregation for absentees, or to think about the next item. The worshipper is free to give his mind to what he is singing. The result is that I find the hymns one of the most helpful elements in worship. I had always been chary of choosing the more personal and subjective hymns. But in the pew one has no feeling of offering an individual act of worship. One is voicing the longings and gratitudes shared by all the congregation. The more personal the hymn, the more corporate it became.

Scripture Readings

To my surprise I found that these were usually the least helpful part of worship, and for a very simple reason. I had harboured the delusion that I read the Lessons rather well. I

now realised that I had usually read them much too fast. Speed does not matter in narrative passages, but where language and thought are compressed, as in the epistles, it is fatal. The mind has no time to grasp one sentence before it is rushed on to the next. A well-known advertisement of Shell petrol will illustrate what I mean. The leader has studied the lesson, and is familiar with its meaning. The hearer has no idea what is coming, and even when familiar with his Bible finds it difficult to grasp the meaning if it is not read slowly, and many hearers are not familiar with their Bibles. When a minister gave a brief introduction it was always helpful. If I am able to lead worship again I shall insist on two readings, I shall read shorter passages and read them more slowly, and often preface them with an explanation. At present much of our public reading of Scripture is waste of time.

The Prayers

These have been the most helpful part of the service. The introduction of Anglican or other prayers has been appreciated, but nothing replaces the value to the worshipper of the freshness and reality of extempore prayer, in spite of its obvious dangers. Prayers have proved most helpful when there has been economy of words, and no attempt to instruct the Almighty or to preach a disguised sermon; when they have been offered slowly enough to give the worshipper time to make the prayer his own; when they have been pointed, definite and relevant to the needs of the congregation; and when they not only voice the prayers of the worshipper but remind him of forgotten blessings and unheeded sins, or lead him in intercession for people he had never thought of praying for. Silent prayer, free or guided by the leader, was invariably helpful to worship. Most of us have found the prayers to be the most difficult part of our conduct of worship, but to the worshipper it is the most rewarding. I am deeply grateful for the help received from the careful, thoughtful preparation of mind and spirit which most of the ministers had obviously given to this part of their task.

Sermons

The following statements are the result of sitting for six months in the pew of a pastorless church, listening to a succession of visiting ministers. Criticisms are directed not least at my own preaching, and I well know from my own experience how impossible it is for those of us who have but average gifts, to do this part of our task thoroughly, amid the pressure of other duties.

On the whole, sermons have not proved as helpful as one expected and hoped. Too many of them were too long. Usually the most effective sermons were the shortest. One sees the effect of length very plainly from a back pew. This is the normal picture. Everybody is attentive at first. After fifteen minutes the younger worshippers begin to fidget. After twenty minutes their elders get restless, glance at their watches, or by their wandering looks

reveal their wandering minds. Not seldom that extra five or ten minutes killed the sermon for the worshipper.

Unwise length may be due to conceit. Our own sermons are so full of good things! More often, it is due to sheer lack of time for thorough preparation. It is more difficult to say a thing in ten minutes than in fifteen minutes. To give our message in twenty minutes, without omitting anything vital, needs more thought than to give it in half an hour. There are occasions when it is impossible to say all that we want to say, and think should be said, in twenty minutes. Why not cut the sermon in two? Our people rather welcome, "To be continued in our next." We ought to be able to say in twenty minutes not all that could be said but as much as our hearers can assimilate. Far better to send them home singing, "Too soon we rise," than to make them feel the only appropriate closing hymn is, "Art thou weary? Art thou languid?" Many sermons would have been far more effective with half the sentences and a third of the adjectives.

Far more serious than the question of length was the irrelevance of some preaching to the needs and thinking of the worshipper. This impression was sharpened by the fact that I entered on my role of listening after six months in a hospital ward, among men who were rarely church goers, but who usually listened avidly, in private conversation, to the Christian approach to their worries and problems. These men were often with me in thought as I listened, and often I knew there was no word there for them. Even an earnest evangelical address which warmed my own heart would have been remote and irrelevant to them. For one thing, the language would have been unintelligible. The preacher did not stand where they stood. Leader and worshipper were using different wave-lengths.

Not many such people are in our services, but there are usually some of them there. Yet even in the worship for the saints I have felt that same irrelevance, that same lack of understanding of the real needs of the pew. Every word of the sermon may be true, and clearly and convincingly expressed, yet leave the hearer in the air. I remember an eloquent sermon on the priesthood of believers. It was excellent—as far as it went—but it did not meet our need. We knew before the sermon began that ours was a priestly calling. But our constant problem was how to fulfil our calling. We were given no inkling of what priesthood involved in home, factory, office, etc., no guide as to how we might become priests in fact as in name. Too many sermons told us what we already knew and believed, without helping us in applying that knowledge to our daily, commonplace living. As Christians we knew the Way. What we eagerly desired was to know how to walk in it.

There was not only a lack of understanding of the worshipper's desire to live his Christian life more adequately. There was also an under-estimate of his desire to understand the Christian faith

**A MESSAGE FROM Mr. SEYMOUR J. PRICE
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
BAPTIST MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP**

My dear Friends,

“LITTLE FISH ARE SWEET”

One of the earliest things that I learnt in business was the truth of this old saying.

Forty years ago I hoped to spend the evening of a glorious August day on the tennis courts, but the afternoon post brought a postcard asking me to call at seven o'clock as to some fire insurance. I found the address was a poor basement flat and that all the tenant, who could hardly sign his name, wanted was to insure his furniture for £125 at the minimum premium of 2s. 6d. I am afraid that inwardly I was not very pleased; but . . .

A year or two later that man unexpectedly became the manager of a small haulage business. Within five years, owing to the death of the proprietor, he had purchased it. He transferred the insurances to me, the premiums being about £50. Prosperity came to him in the post-war years and, when I sold my Insurance Broker's business seven years ago, his successors were paying my firm nearly £2,000 per annum.

Thirty years ago I heard the story of a Welsh deacon who needed to move to London. The housing shortage was acute and for weeks he had tried in vain to get a house. Then one evening he said to his wife, “Give me the Baptist Handbook. As a final effort I will write to two Church Secretaries.” One Secretary replied that he was sorry he could do nothing; the other started by praising his Church and assuring his correspondent that a warm welcome awaited him. He added that, although the housing situation was difficult, a sympathetic estate agent would send particulars of two houses. When the Welshman moved to London the Church officers found that he was not only a devout Christian but also a leader in industry. His subsequent generosity to the Church matched his substantial income.

We have proved in the Insurance Company that we never know to what the smallest act or introduction may lead. Our attention to the proposal or the claim of a few shillings is as prompt and willing as to the case carrying a big premium or a claim involving four figures. Many of our claims range between five shillings and five pounds. Satisfactory attention to “little fish” has brought sweetness in the shape of introductions to bigger. And that is scriptural.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

more clearly. How few "teaching" sermons one heard. How a-scriptural much of our preaching has become. How often a text was used as the conventional opening gambit and then hastily deserted. How rarely one heard a genuine exposition of a passage of scripture. Evidently there are manse where Bible study is not priority No. 1. The sermons which helped were those which sent us home to read our Bibles with new light and insight.

In addition, though every one of the worshippers may be a convinced Christian, he is still a Christian in a largely pagan world, familiar with its standards and thoughts, and subject to its unceasing pressure on mind and conscience. Here in Church he is in a sheltered enclave, but he is vividly aware of the surge and beat of the troubled seas outside. He shares in the life of the community, and he needs guidance as to the Christian attitude to the questions of the day. Preaching which deals only with the inner life of the soul will meet only part of his need. It is easy for the preacher to give the impression that he lives in another world than the one the worshipper knows.

I will end by putting into words some of the mental resolves I have made as a result of these months in the pew.

To read and pray more slowly; to do my best to give my message in twenty minutes; to give less time to general statements of truth and more to applying it; to seize every opportunity to know what other people think and feel, especially those outside the church; to this end, to listen more and talk less when visiting or meeting others; to introduce an element of surprise into every service, e.g. use another translation for the lesson, change the form of the sermon, use varying methods in leading the congregation in prayer; and never to enter my pew without having regularly prayed for the leader of worship.

FRANK BUFFARD.

A NEW APPROACH TO MINISTERIAL TRAINING

IN these days when it has become common to speak of the decline of the Churches, a recent survey conducted by Seeböhm Rowntree and G. R. Lavers has revealed that the contemporary situation with regard to religious belief in this country is alarming. The fall in Church attendance and a general disregard for Sunday observance has been plain enough, but accurate and extensive enquiries giving data on the beliefs and attitudes of people in general towards the Church has, on the whole, been lacking. "In the lives of a large majority of people of all classes," says the report, "the Church is no longer relevant." There is a widespread rejection of much of the New Testament story of the early Christian Church, and large numbers remain unconvinced of the importance of Christian doctrine and practice in modern life. Furthermore, in the eyes of the man-in-the-street the clergyman has lost respect,

for in the course of their survey the authors "found so widespread a dislike of the ministers of religion of the Anglican and Free Churches that it can only be described as anti-clericalism." Whether this attitude is justified, is irrelevant in this context. The fact that it is widely held and frequently expressed remains. It is imperative, therefore, that careful thought be given as to how this anti-clerical movement may be countered most effectively.

There is evidence that many Churches are alive to these problems. Since the inauguration of the movement for Baptist Advance several evangelistic campaigns have shown heartening results. It has been found that one of the most acute problems is how effectual contact with persons for whom the Church has hitherto had little or no significance can be established. A distinguished Free Church leader stated, "There is no doubt that the speaking, publications, and even way of thinking of the Church are simply not in harmony with the way of life of the people." This question of communication is not one by any means peculiar to the Christian ministry, for it is a *sine qua non* of democracy. It may be said that it is a condition of every minister's ability to carry out his work of evangelism that he recognises and overcomes three primary problems of communication. First, he must use language which is readily understood. Secondly, the concepts which he adopts and his illustrative material must be familiar to his listeners. Finally, it is vital that the minister proves himself capable of convincing people that what he believes and teaches is of supreme importance, and highly relevant to their daily lives. Obedience to these three fundamental principles implies an intimate knowledge of the way of life of ordinary men and women. It must be admitted that many men entering the Christian ministry, and too many already therein, are without this basic knowledge. Yet without such equipment they are singularly ill-fitted to grapple with the pressing demands of evangelism. Many methods are being tried on a yet too limited scale in an attempt to extend wider the bounds of contact and influence the Church already has. How can these "communication problems" be solved in our situation? Does the solution lie in house-to-house visitation, open-air meetings, "popular" services, the formation of youth clubs within Churches, or an extension of the work of the laity with the clergy responsible for overall organisation and Christian teaching? Certainly there is something to be said for all these means, but, in my opinion, the tremendous needs call for more revolutionary measures—the supplementation of ministerial training by practical work amongst people of all types and classes, and tuition in the social sciences.

The training value of theological colleges to-day must neither be underrated nor dismissed as in any way irrelevant. There must of necessity be a basic training in Biblical theology and allied subjects. Lectures on pastoral theology are naturally related to matters of everyday Church life and to situations students will

commonly meet in the course of their future ministry. One college I know has instituted training in open-air speaking on the ground that it is likely to become an important medium ministers must be prepared to use. In general, a less academic type of curriculum appears to be needed for the demands the future will make upon candidates for the ministry. In an attempt to meet these requirements it is suggested that students proposing to enter the ministry be given training in social science, and be offered opportunities of engaging in practical work which will give them a deeper insight into the way of life, manner of thinking and spiritual needs of the people with whom they will deal as ministers.

University courses in the social sciences in this country are a comparatively recent innovation. Students may take a two-year course for the diploma or a three-year course for a degree. Students for an ordinary degree may also include social science as a qualifying subject. Any of these courses would prove invaluable to theological students. Some aspects of the subject are social economics, the elements of social organisation, the principles and methods of social work, social legislation, industrial relations and psychology. The longer and more specialised courses include social ethics, social anthropology (invaluable to students intending to work in the mission field) and social medicine. Some Universities have facilities for a term's work at a settlement. It may not be practicable for theological students to pursue full courses in social studies and public administration (although they would find the knowledge gained by no means wasted), but what would be most useful would be a course of lectures on social organisation, social ethics and social psychology, as well as general tuition in practical social work.

It is not intended that this training should be heavily weighted on the academic side. A most important supplementation would be that of practical work. For this branch of training each college would require to appoint a tutor in practical work from the staff of a University. His function would be to arrange visits to factories, to institutions such as children's homes, blind institutes and community centres, thus enabling students to gain a representative picture of the diverse spheres of social work. But this is only a small facet of the pains which every student of society must be prepared to suffer and it must not be forgotten that without a most careful and intimate study of the members of the society to which he belongs, no minister can begin to take his work seriously. The only effective way to acquire adequate knowledge of how different types of people live and work is to live and work with them, to share their thoughts, fears, problems and every activity in which they engage. This is the very first step any worker amongst people must take, whether his vocation be that of welfare worker or evangelist, and there are no short cuts, no easy answers to the solving of these human problems. Theological colleges, therefore, should have the services of someone whose duty it would be to arrange for students to spend up to half their long

vacations in a local factory or settlement, where they can take their place doing some unskilled job side by side with other workers, learn what it is to labour amidst incessant noise and heat, to rub shoulders and eat meals with the roughest. At other vacation times a student could visit various branches of social welfare work. Local National Assistance Boards have found that, in investigating applications, many people do not require financial assistance, but practical help and advice in managing their own affairs. Welfare work of intrinsic value, besides providing an amazing insight into the lives of the more unfortunate, taking this form of practical aid in distressed slum areas, can be arranged with Family Service Units. The National Councils of Social Service also need workers, particularly for the care of the aged. All these types of activity give students wider opportunities of understanding the lives of those with whom as ministers they will have to deal in future years.

Last century Charles Booth sought to assess the extent of the social evils which surrounded him, determined to answer, as far as he was able, questions which in these days are still matters of urgency: "Who are the people of England? How do they really live? What do they really want? Do they want what is good? And, if so, how is it to be given them?" As a result of his social survey, Booth published his *Life and Labour of the People in London*. He could have accomplished this only by living amongst the very people whose problems he was seeking to discover. Until this primary work had been done no legislation could be enacted to alleviate the suffering.

Similarly, the social anthropologist, in studying human beings in all parts of the world as creatures of society, is not content nowadays to sit at home and document reports of travellers from overseas. He lives as a member of the society of which he is making his study, making their customs and beliefs for the time being his own, sharing their activities in work and play, joining in their songs and listening to their myths. For a time he subordinates all other considerations to his primary purpose of studying the cultural configurations of a particular society.

Finally, we have the example of Christ Himself, Who thought it not unbecoming to fulfil the humblest of roles Himself, and made Himself acquainted with the problems of His fellow-men by sharing their life by the lakeside, in the street and market place, and at the publican's table. Only so could He be assured of His teachings retaining their relevancy to contemporary affairs, and preserve Himself from that remoteness of outlook to which every minister is in danger of falling a prey.

It is not expected that these thoughts on revised ministerial training should form more than a single suggestion as to how the Church must seek to re-equip herself to meet the present situation. Nevertheless it is one which I believe is well worth serious consideration. Any implementation will undoubtedly raise

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1. As colleague to a minister in the general work of the Church.
2. As minister's assistant in charge of a mission or some special work in the Church.
3. As Deaconess in charge of some small Church (or Churches) or Mission.
4. In pioneering in new districts and in laying foundations for the future Church.
5. In reviving causes that have lost vitality.
6. In specialising in women's work, or Youth leadership, or Sunday School work, or Moral and Social Welfare.
7. Special emphasis is laid on general and house-to-house visitation.

For information please apply to: The Organising Secretary, Order of Baptist Deaconesses and Women's Training College.

practical difficulties and require judicious plans. The measure we are prepared to rethink the ways in which ministers are trained for their vocation is the measure of how vital we regard their task. Let us not hesitate to give heed to the methods employed by the social scientist in his search, as a student of society, into ways whereby he can benefit mankind. It is this exalted aim which summons the Christian minister as he faces unprecedented opportunities, and recognises around him much land which remains yet to be possessed. Upon the close adjustment of his training to the contemporary needs of society rests much of the success of Baptist Advance.

JOHN HOUGH.

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY TO-DAY

DR. DODD, in his commentary on Romans, remarked that in studying the thought of St. Paul, as of any ancient writer, we naturally ask, what does he say, and what does he mean by what he says? There is a third question, Dodd added, which for the older commentators did not arise. Is what he says true? It is that question that disturbs many thoughtful minds, within and without the Church, in our time.

It would indeed have filled earlier generations with astonishment or with horror. The Bible, they would have acclaimed, is a compendium of sacred writings coming direct from God, His book, His word. When we have determined what the writers say, and what they mean by what they say, we are bound to accept what they say as finally authoritative. William Wilberforce begins his *Practical View*, the most influential book produced by an Anglican during the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, with the affirmation that the test by which he wishes his statements to be judged is whether they "accord with the language of the sacred writings"; and his standpoint was that of every earnest Christian at that time. With the advent of modern Biblical scholarship, and of the questions it inevitably raised, the mind of the Church underwent a great change. Its extent may be measured by comparing the saying of Wilberforce with words written in 1903 by such a conservative theologian as James Denney: "Belief in the inspiration of Scripture is neither the foundation of Christian theology, nor the beginning of the Christian life. It is the last conclusion to which we are led by experience of the truth of Scripture." The appeal of the Christian evangelist is no longer to the language of the sacred writings but to experience.

It is not an altogether satisfactory answer to the problem of Biblical authority. Christian experience is the effect of what the Christian has found in the Bible. The question remains whether or in what manner we are bound to regard whatever we find as authoritative.

Recently a number of eminent scholars have produced a symposium on *Biblical Authority To-day*, though they are concerned particularly with Biblical authority in relation to social and political life. The book is packed with matter, but it is the section headed "Guiding Principles" that is most directly relevant to the general question of the authority of the Bible. There we are reminded most properly that for Christians the final authority is in the will of God. His will, however, is mediated in the Bible as nowhere else; for in the Bible we are confronted with His word.

Where, then, and what is the word of God with which we are confronted in the Bible? It is not for the most part to be found in particular sayings providing the answer to particular problems, or the remedy for particular ills. It is not in legal enactments nor, generally, in affirmations of doctrine. All these bear the marks of the minds through which they were mediated and of the conditions to which they were addressed in the first instance. There is room for intelligent discrimination in dealing with them. Even John Calvin distinguished between Biblical commands that are permanently valid, and those that cannot be regarded as binding on Christian men. Most Christians have held that they were bound to keep a weekly Sabbath, but few have felt that they were under a similar obligation to obey the law of the Sabbatical Year. Not every word in the Bible is a word of God, nor is His word to be heard in every saying and every passage. There are words that were directed against God, words that misrepresent God, even though the speakers thought they were defending God—against the angry outbursts of the stricken Job, for example. St. Paul distinguished between those of his sayings that conveyed his own judgments and those that were written at the command of his Lord. He certainly would not have claimed that he was invariably inspired when writing the letters that now form part of Holy Scripture.

Forty years ago we were frequently reminded that the Bible is not a book, but a collection of books written or compiled under different conditions and over a long period of time. It is a library comprising books of several different kinds, legal, historical, poetical, prophetic. Perhaps the first canon of sound interpretation is that a book should be read, *in its own character*, poetry as poetry, history as history. So far as that is possible. That is elementary, but it is often forgotten even, or especially, by Biblical theologians. It is not always easy to distinguish, but there is a difference between the account of the Creation in Genesis, and the story of the Risen Lord in the Gospels. The first obviously could not be a literal report of what actually happened when God created the stars; the second as clearly purports to be a record of historical events, and to speak as some do of the myth of the Resurrection is to do violence to the intention of the writers. We may decide if we must that they were mistaken; we have no right to say that they were clothing spiritual truths in myth or allegory. Latterly what

has been stressed is not the diversity of the books in the sacred library, but the unity they manifest when considered as a whole. All are concerned with the story of a particular people. Together they form a record of its development from its beginnings in the distant past to the point when it was scattered over the earth in what must have seemed final defeat and total eclipse. Pre-eminently the Bible is history, not always directly recorded, but more often reflected in the beliefs, the poetry, the dreams that at this point or that sustained the national soul and the national life. It is history, but history seen from a particular standpoint—the standpoint of those for whom events were not merely events, but indications of the activity of the God Who had called this people to a position of special responsibility and peculiar privilege.

The authority of the Bible is in the revelation of which this history is both the setting and the vehicle. The revelation is *in* the history, and through those who were commissioned to interpret the history to Israel, and to the race. The history was as familiar to the Egyptian or the Assyrian as to the Hebrews, but they construed the history in widely different ways. Even the Hebrews were often mistaken in the interpretation they put upon it. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I visit upon you all of your iniquities," but that was not the moral they had drawn from the mighty acts He had wrought for their comfort and their deliverance. It was necessary that those acts should be interpreted by His "servants the prophets," in whose story we encounter what is certainly among the most astonishing and significant of historical phenomena. These men claimed to be speaking at the direct command of the Almighty, and when we consider the contrast between their teaching and the environment in which they lived, the hesitation with which they embarked on their mission, the suffering to which they were exposed through their fidelity, we can hardly resist the conclusion that the claim is true. There were hours when they talked as men, reasoning with God, expostulating with God, even protesting that God had deceived them. There were hours when they talked as men inspired, and then their words are charged with the authority of the Power that inspired them.

They differed in matters of detail, in range and clarity of vision they were not equal, but they all sound certain notes which we catch again when under their guiding we study the story they interpret for us. There is righteousness, which is what God demands of men, not vaguely conceived but illustrated often in sharpest detail and including both justice and mercy. There is rebellion, for Israel, and Israel in this represents mankind as a rebellious house. There is retribution, falling inevitably on those who flout the law of righteousness. There is redemption, through the patient mercy of the God Whose law has been thrust aside.

It is when, under the direction of the prophets, we hear these notes sounding forth through the story of Israel, that we begin

to apprehend not only the meaning of the story but the part the story was designed to play in the history of mankind. We begin to learn what is meant by the claim that Israel was a chosen nation, with which God had entered into a covenant, a covenant however that prefaced and foreshadowed the covenant into which He would enter with the human race.

As long as we linger with the prophets indeed there is much that remains uncertain, and, in particular, how and by what means God will effect the redemption they promise. To that the New Testament is the answer, and primarily the Grand Affirmation of the New Testament that the God Who had spoken through the prophets has spoken now in His Son.

There, too, is the answer to the question, what is the word of God with which we are confronted in the Bible? It is Christ Who is the key to the Scripture. That does not mean that every text, every symbol has a Christward reference. It means that the validity of any text, of any symbol, must be tested against the background of His teaching and of His cross. It means that whatever cannot be harmonised with the revelation in Christ must be treated as provisional, or transitory, or simply illegitimate.

How can we be certain that we have rightly divined the word of God in the Bible? The common answer is that we apprehend the truth by faith, but faith is neither blind credulity nor a merely personal preference. Faith is, at the outset, sincerity, honesty, freedom from prejudice. It is more than these, but without these it is unattainable.

Faith is a gift, and the power to accept, or reject, the gift, is also a gift. It is all of grace, and yet for our personal attitudes we are personally responsible. It should be plainly said that the message of the Bible is given to those who approach the Bible with humility and open-minded intelligence. If men cannot hear, it is because they are bemused by pride, or fear, or by their prejudices, against the possibility of the miraculous and the like.

There is room for variations in our judgments about the meaning of this passage, about the deductions we may properly draw from that; and in such matters much depends on our training and the bent of our own minds, but the fundamental question is, What think ye of Christ? The truth is not guaranteed by any magical formula. His own question remains—Why even of yourselves will ye not judge what is good?

H. INGLI JAMES.

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE

THIS subject was chosen out of a conviction that there is an organic and vital connection between Christian leadership and the devotional life, at least as close as one would expect to find between, for example, athletic prowess and the possession of a good physique.

The devotional life is a function, or an activity, of the devoted person. We weaken the word "devotions" if we confine it only to our prayers, our meditations or our times of communion, important though these are. We speak of a man being "at his devotions," or we say we are going to have a "devotional meeting"—good and necessary things, but our view is too restricted if we think that devotions end with these things. Devotions and the devotional life are the activities of a life which is devoted. The word devoted means "vowed and given away," "sacrificed." The Roman soldier "devoted himself to the gods" when he gave his life in battle. So, too, the devoted Christian is one who no longer counts his life his own, but regards it as already "promised away." The devotional life is the life of the devoted person, and no devotional life is possible unless the whole life is already promised away, irrevocably to God.

There is no more important question for any man, young or old, to answer than this: "What cause is worthy that to it I should devote my whole life?" Without an answer to that question, life becomes purposeless and eventually valueless. Everyone is called upon to answer it for ourselves. The obtaining of a livelihood, the care of wife and family, these are worthy of much, but not of all. The only cause that is worthy of all is the one that will enable us to fulfil God's will and purpose for us.

It follows that the devotional life has three prerequisites: first, Faith—belief, in God and in His purpose; second, the Willingness to forsake all to pursue this purpose; and, third, the Resolve never to look back, having once put hand to plough. These were Christ's requirements: Believest thou? Follow Me. No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back is worthy. These are the prerequisites of the devotional life: "Lord, I believe"—even if we have to qualify it at first—"help Thou my unbelief"; "Thy will, not mine"—the beginning of the devoted life; Thy will be done—not what I will, but what Thou wilt—no half-hearted giving. No giving part and withholding part. No turning back. For Christ and for the Christian it is all or nothing.

It is at this point of self-effacement that the life of devotion and Christian leadership are so closely related. Christian leadership requires first the emptying of self. It was so with Christ—being

B. M. S.

REMEMBER

The financial year ends on March 31st.
All monies should be sent in by that
date.

GATHER

At the missionary meetings during the
Assembly. Monday, April 28th, to
Thursday, May 1st.

LOOK OUT

For the new Popular Report, *The Triumph
of His Grace*, and tell its heartening
story to your people.

Address communications to the Acting General Home
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London, W.1.

B. M. S.

found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself—emptied Himself. So, too, it was in His teaching—Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be the servant of all. Christian leadership requires all the qualities of leadership in ordinary human affairs, but with the addition of the ability to serve. Else, why did He wash the disciples' feet, when His last hour was come, if it was not to teach this one last and most important lesson—service and humility? If you would lead, find how you may serve. Learning in Christian leadership is learning in service. Begin with a cup of cold water, if it be in His name, but serve. Serve anywhere, anyhow, any time—but serve. Christian leadership is not personal aggrandisement, its essence is not that you may gain the appearance of superiority over your fellows, but that you may have the reality of serving your fellows effectively.

What, then, of the practice of the Devotional Life? It is really the day-to-day finding out of what is God's will for this day. What is it that God wants of me to-day? It involves the careful planning of one's time, as in His sight. It means finding regularly, daily, a time of quiet in which can be learnt what is God's will. Not an easy task, amid the distractions of daily life. In present-day China, we are told, the ordinary Chinese spends from six to eight in the morning, and again, from six to eight in the evening, attending the indoctrination classes prescribed by the new People's Government. If Communism can achieve this much, will not the love of our Lord do as much for us? Begin, in our daily times of quiet, with our own needs, and then pass on to thoughts of others, seeking ways in which we can be of service to them. Let our Bible reading not become as a prescribed passage, to be got through, but as the description of a situation in which man and God are in relationship, in which it is possible to find out something of the way in which God reveals His nature to man, and thus will it become the means of increasing your understanding of the nature of God and His purposes. Above all, live the whole of life as in His presence and in His service. If He fills our life, our service will become His praise.

In preparing this article I have had before me the example of my father. My brothers and I knew in our childhood how real a thing was his devotional life, but I think it was not until the last years of his illness that we understood how close this life had brought him to his loved Master. Leadership to him was the desire to bring others into this close relationship, and to know him, even in his physical weakness, was to gain strength and cheer and courage in his company, and to be led by him into the places where he walked humbly with his God. May we strive as sincerely, and walk as closely, and lead as surely.

RONALD J. STILL.

THE BAPTIST MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS, year ended 31st December, 1951

GENERAL FUND

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To Cash at Bank, 1st January, 1951	28 14 0	By Battley Bros.—Magazine	263 17 0
" Cash in Hand, 1st January, 1951	2 2 9	" Postages	68 3 0
" Subscriptions (approx. £73 10s. refers to Over-seas and approx. £8 refers to B.M.S.)	419 17 8	" Printing and Stationery	57 6 4
Advertisements	72 10 0	" Membership Contribution—W. T. Whitley	10 0 0
Transfer from S. G. Morris Fund	1 10 11	" Lectureship	51 0 7
		" Officers and Committee, Travelling and Sundry Expenses	7 10 5
		" Sundry Expenses	53 11 4
		" Cash at Bank, 31st December, 1951	13 6 8
		" Cash in Hand, 31st December, 1951	£524 15 4

NOTE: £40 12s. 0d. of the balance of £66 18s. 0d. represents Subscriptions paid in Advance at 31st December, 1951.

RESERVE ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To Cash at Bank, 1st January, 1951	50 0 0	By Cash at Bank, 31st December, 1951	150 0 0
" Legacy—W. Knight Chaplin	100 0 0		
	£150 0 0		£150 0 0

BENEVOLENT ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To Cash at Bank, 1st January, 1951	6 16 6	By Grants	41 3 0
" Proportion of Collection at A.G.B.M., 1951	9 7 10	" Cash at Bank, 31st December, 1951	5 3 10
" Donations	30 2 6		
	£46 6 10		£46 6 10

LIBRARY ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
£	s. d.	£	s. d.
To Cash at Bank, 1st January, 1951	19 19 10	By Books Purchased	...
" Proportion of Collection at A.G.B.M., 1951	9 7 10	" Boxes, etc.	...
" Grant—Particular Baptist Fund	25 0 0	" Printing, Stationery, Postage and Sundry Expenses	...
" Sale of Books	13 4	" Cash at Bank, 31st December, 1951	...
	<u>£55 1 0</u>		<u>£55 1 0</u>

SUMMER SCHOOL ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
£	s. d.	£	s. d.
To Cash at Bank, 1st January, 1951	61 16 5	By Boarding Charges, etc.	...
" Cash in Hand, 1st January, 1951	24 4 0	" Travelling Expenses	...
" B.U. Grant	300 0 0	" Fees and Expenses of Lecturers	...
" Fees, Gratuities, etc.	65 9 9	" N.H.W. Fund—Donation	...
" Communion Collection	1 16 3	" Printing, Postage, Stationery and Sundry Expenses	...
	<u>£453 6 5</u>	" Refund, part B.U. Grant	...
		" Cash at Bank, 31st December, 1951	...
			<u>£453 6 5</u>

I have prepared the foregoing Receipts and Payments Accounts from the records kept and vouchers produced, together with information received from the Rev. Charles Bullock, and certify them correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

7th February, 1952.

MARJORIE BRAND,
Audit Clerk.

S. G. MORRIS ACCOUNT—JUBILEE PRESENTATION

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
£	s. d.	£	s. d.
To Donations	91 1 7	By Payment to S. G. Morris	...
		" Bouquet to Mrs. S. G. Morris	...
		" Printing, Stationery, Postage, etc.	...
		" Transfer to General Account	...
	<u>£91 1 7</u>		<u>£91 1 7</u>

A GREETING FROM SWEDEN

We gladly publish the following welcomed greeting, to which a warm reply has been sent by our Overseas Secretary, C. Sidney Hall.

"To the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship in Great Britain.

Dear Mr. Chairman,

At the yearly Conference of Swedish Baptist Ministers in Stockholm, from 11th to 14th December, we had the privilege of listening to Dr. L. G. Champion, of Bristol, who gave us a series of very inspiring and helpful lectures on the New Testament Church.

The Conference wants to avail itself of this opportunity of sending their British brethren in the Baptist ministry this message of fellowship and goodwill.

The contacts between British and Swedish Baptists is old. In one of our very first yearly assemblies, in 1858, for instance, there were two British Baptist ministers, Dr. Edward Steane and Rev. H. Hinton, present. Since then a great number of British Baptist ministers have visited our country. In recent years the late Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, Dr. Townley Lord, Dr. T. G. Dunning, Rev. W. T. Cowlan, and others have paid valuable visits to our churches.

From our side a considerable number of Swedish Baptist ministers have visited your churches. Others have taken part in ministers' fraternals and conferences in your country, and have become acquainted with British Baptist ministers in that way. A great number of our ministers are regular readers of *The Baptist Times*, which is sent here by British friends.

The Conference would like to express to you its sincere appreciation of what has been done in this, and in other ways, in years past.

At the same time the Conference wants to assure you of the desire of the Swedish Baptist ministers to strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship and friendship in years to come. Your ministers should know that they will always be welcomed to our churches and homes.

It is our belief that the calling of a Baptist minister is more important in our age than ever. In the difficult but glorious task of presenting the Gospel of our common Lord Jesus Christ to modern men we want to join hands with you, British colleagues and brethren. May God's blessing rest upon you all.

The Conference asks you, Mr. Chairman, to convey this greeting to your brethren in a convenient way.

On behalf of the Conference,

STURE TJADER,

Chairman of the Conference.

MANNE LUNDGREN,

Chairman of the Ministers' Fellowship
of the Swedish Baptist Union.

RUBEN SWEDBERG,

President of the Swedish Baptist Union."

“ To make Christ known in the Homeland ”

THE HOME WORK FUND

Ministers are asked to keep the work of the Baptist Union
before their Churches and congregations

We are all concerned with the extension of Christ's
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It is of the greatest importance that the sum contributed
by the Churches in 1952 reaches

£50,000

“ To help win the Homeland for Christ ”

THE BAPTIST UNION DIPLOMA IN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

ITS PURPOSE :

1. To promote among Baptists an enlarged understanding of the Christian Faith.
2. To assist Baptists to fit themselves for various forms of Christian Service.
3. To help Teachers to fit themselves to give Religious Instruction in the Schools.

WHY NOT START A STUDY GROUP IN YOUR CHURCH ?

Full particulars can be obtained from the Secretary :—

Rev. A. S. Clement, B.A., B.D., 54 Spencer Avenue, Coventry

OF INTEREST TO YOU

Pastoral Changes. R. W. Aitken, Birmingham (Ward End); A. J. Blower, Bolton; D. Chaplin, Blaby; H. Clarkson, Blackpool (South Shore); J. S. Coleman, Talywain, Mon.; S. F. Field, Bournemouth (West Cliff); C. A. C. Hadler, Bristol (Knowle); L. G. Harding, Birmingham (Aston); A. H. Hawkins, Worcester Park; L. F. Higgs, Burnham-on-Crouch; G. R. Hooper, Peterborough; W. J. Howells, Atch Lench, Worcs.; P. L. Jones, Exeter; L. A. Lane, Budleigh Salterton; C. Letts, Boston; P. McClean, Edinburgh (Gorgie); G. A. D. Mann, High Wycombe; C. L. Martin, Croyde; E. W. Mills, Newcastle (Central Hall); T. C. Mitchell, Luton (Blenheim); E. Moorhouse, Burnley; J. Nash, Belvedere; R. F. Panter, South Shields; J. Pritchard, Auckland, New Zealand; S. P. Shields, Dublin; H. M. Simpson, Wolverhampton; V. J. Smith, Weston-super-Mare; J. S. Thorburn, Southampton; C. Thomas, Burghle-Marsh; E. Tribe, Walmer; L. W. Walters, Bovey Tracy; E. J. Willis, Southend; F. Wiltshire, Barrow-in-Furness.

In addition to these K. J. Clark has entered the Anglican ministry.

Retirements. After long and honourable service the following have retired from the active ministry: E. C. Camble, R. J. Cusden, Percy Lake, R. J. Willoughby. We wish for all these brethren God's rich blessing, further years of useful service.

Illness. At the time of writing several of our brethren are on the sick list: Trevor Landon, W. A. L. Pearce, Clifford Wood, A. J. Taylor, A. Collie, T. G. Dunning, Glan Morgan, E. C. Notman, Garnet Powell, A. B. Barker.

More happily, we can record that others have recovered from illness, amongst them: Dr. W. O. Lewis, A. H. Waugh, E. V. Whittle, E. G. Reeve, W. Lonsdale, F. W. Gubbins, A. L. Hilliard.

Congratulations. A. J. Kellam has just attained his ministerial jubilee, and F. W. Porter has completed forty years at Trinity, Bexleyheath—his one and only pastorate. No other London minister now serving has such a record and not many in the past have exceeded it. Affectionate greetings to both these friends.

College Settlements. Among invitations accepted by Associate members in our Colleges are the following: J. N. Birdsall (Jesus College), Thaxted; D. G. Gardener (Bristol), King's Stanley; R. D. Hall (Dublin), Lydbrook. From Manchester: A. Gilmore, Kingsthorpe, Northampton; Martin Jupe, Hull (Boulevard); G. D. Savage, Tottlebank; R. Williamson, Accrington. From Regent's: B. G. Hastings, Adnitt Road, Northampton, and from Spurgeon's: C. J. W. Doble, Ruislip; D. G. J. Pigott, Maesteg; C. W. Stear, Chislehurst; W. Copley, Gravesend; N. L. Harris, Chatteris.

Deaths. Spared to an advanced age, two of our greatly respected members have been taken from us—W. A. Finlay and

C. F. Perry. Two others were fatally injured in street accidents—J. S. Iles and S. M. Loveridge. After notable service in the Pastorate, as General Superintendent, and Principal of Struan Training College, H. H. Sutton has passed away after prolonged and painful illness bravely borne. W. E. Palmer was for many years resident at Yalding, where he combined with a business calling the oversight of the local church. The whole village mourned his passing. O. P. Robinson laboured devotedly at Earls Soham and elsewhere, and E. S. Gray, in addition to home pastorates, served for eight years in the Canadian ministry, and was awarded the degree of B.Th. by McMaster University. We send brotherly sympathy to the relatives bereaved and also to W. S. Davies, who mourns the death of his wife. We crave for one and another, remembrance at our Sunday Prayer-Watch.

L.B.A. Presidency. Our Secretary, Charles Johnson, has entered upon this high office, and we wish him a year of great blessing. It is an honour well deserved.

Every Little Helps. Many thanks to David Kyles, of the Stirling Tract Depot, for a parcel of writing paper and envelopes for the use of the B.M.F. This, like other kind gifts, explains the reason why we can keep our annual subscription at 3s. 6d.

If by reason of strength. There is no "if" in the cases of E. F. M. Vokes, T. W. Chance, A. J. D. Farrer, nor need we finish the quotation from the Psalmist. Three years ago we should have noted the accession to this honourable company of William C. Minifie. We mention him now in order to thank him for his kindness in connection with our Gaius Scheme, in placing his chalet at Dartmouth at the disposal of some of our ministers for the holiday season—a very kindly act.

The Richard Cusden Homes. Our fellow-member Richard Cusden has long laboured, to the limit of his strength, in the interests of the Wandsworth Borough Housing Society. So greatly has his work been appreciated that, together with the Mayor, he has been elected Vice-President and the Homes bear his name as their title. A signal honour, well deserved. May he long be spared to witness the blessing he has worked so devotedly to achieve on behalf of the aged poor of Wandsworth.

A Pleasing Postcard. "I have sent three boxes of second-hand books to Keith Tucker, Calabar College, Jamaica, in response to your appeal." We are grateful to William Ashby, and hope others have copied his example.

The Free Church Fellowship. This is a group of ministers and laymen pledged to prayerful study for the discernment of God's Will in all human relationships, social, economic and international, and to seek more fully to understand the rules and conditions of holy living. A Conference will be held, 21st to 25th April, at Southlands College, Wimbledon, the subject being, "The Life of Prayer." Particulars will be gladly furnished by the Secretary, Rev. G. C. Edmonds, The Manse, Gerrards Cross, Bucks.

Fellow Craftsmen. We are interested to learn that C. T. Cook has been editor of *The Christian* for upwards of twenty-three years. We congratulate our fellow member on the high standard of his journal and wish him many more years' occupancy of the editorial chair.

Another magazine deserving honourable mention is the *Quest*, produced jointly by W. T. Cowlan and Godfrey Robinson. It is well illustrated and contains interesting information and should have a wide circulation in all our youth organisations.

If Dr. Lord and his capable sub-editor, Bentley, would also like a similar testimony concerning the *Baptist Times*, it shall be given without hesitation.

Congratulations to A. S. Clements on his appointment as editor of B.M.S. publications. He succeeds H. L. Hemmens, who has rendered invaluable service in this work and to whom we send the best of good wishes as he retires from the office he has filled with such distinction.

Travellers. Bon voyage to our greatly loved ex-B.U. Secretary, M. E. Aubrey, now on his way to U.S.A. His many engagements will include a series of lectures to the Berkeley Divinity School, in which our B.M.F. is interested. We would send a greeting through their distinguished visitor to the Faculty and students.

Two other of our members are crossing the Atlantic—W. J. Grant and Godfrey Robinson. May much blessing attend them on their busy tour. Godspeed also to the most travelled of all—Townley Lord, President of the B.W.A. It will be a joy to us to welcome the return of J. B. Middlebrook, of whose recovery we learn with deep gratitude. Also, J. Tweedley and Gordon Pearce, returning from their important visit to B.M.S. stations on the Congo.

Summer School. There are a few places vacant at the Summer School at St. John's College, Oxford, Monday, 7th July, to Thursday (lunch), 10th July. Write direct to R. Rowsell, Carey Manse, Park Street, Kettering. The lecturers: Frank Bryan, M.A. (Pastoral), L. G. Champion, B.A., B.D., D.Th. (Theological), Ernest A. Payne, M.A., D.D. The Pastoral Session will be held at Bloomsbury on Wednesday, 30th April, commencing at 2.15 p.m. Speaker: Arthur Dakin, D.Th. Subject: "Spiritual Healing."

OUR MEMBERSHIP

In view of the forthcoming Annual Meeting we publish elsewhere a Financial Statement. In addition, the following membership figures will be interesting—they are in each case approximate. British Isles: 1,600; students, 120; B.M.S., 60; Australia and Tasmania, 140, including 30 students; New Zealand, 50; South Africa, 50; Canada, 40; U.S.A., 50; Ceylon, 20; Jamaica, 20; Europe, etc., 20.

THE WIDER CIRCLE
OVERSEAS

New South Wales. An interesting experiment was made by A. H. Orr at his church at Ashfield, Sydney. He arranged that on one Saturday the whole of the New Testament should be read in public in his church. There were about seventy readers, each being allotted fifteen minutes, and the readings were continued from 5.30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Throughout the day there was a good attendance, sometimes amounting to between seventy and eighty people. The experiment aroused considerable interest and was deemed well worth while.

At the Annual Assembly a record Missionary Budget of £50,000 was accepted and encouraging accounts were received of the progress of the pioneer work in New Guinea.

In appreciation of the fifty years of ministry fulfilled by C. J. Tinsley it was announced that the Southern Baptists of U.S.A. had donated five thousand dollars toward the hospital in New Guinea which is to bear his name.

All the State Assemblies were well attended and alive with interest. The President-General, Dr. W. L. Jarvis, was able to attend three, and in each case delivered an inspiring address.

Victoria. The Diamond Jubilee of the College has just been celebrated. Great meetings were held in Collins Street, Melbourne, where the history of the College was presented in pictures, speeches and music.

The first two Principals were Rawdon men, W. T. Whitley, who, in the course of his eleven years' tenure of office, well and truly laid the foundation of the College. W. H. Holdsworth held the position for twenty-five years and won the lasting affection of generations of students. A. J. Grigg is a worthy successor, and exercises influence, not only in Victoria, but throughout Australia. He receives efficient support from E. C. Burleigh, one of the Tutors, who will be remembered by Bristol men of the '20s. May continued success attend the College as it progresses toward its centenary.

South Australia. The latest development in ministerial training in Australia is the erection of a Residential College in South Australia, a forward move which, like that of South Africa, will be watched with sympathy and interest in Britain.

We note with interest the appointment of D. J. Morris as Superintendent of the Adelaide City Mission. May he be used greatly in this important sphere of service.

Queensland. H. E. West and his wife, both students of Queensland Baptist College, have been farewelled to India. There are at present fifteen students in the College.

R. W. Hodgson enters upon a new pastorate at Murgon, and J. E. White at Ipswich. May blessing attend their ministry.

Under the rigorous leadership of the Home Mission Superintendent, fifty-one centres of Baptist work have been established

To George E. Simpson, commencing his pastorate in Bedford, N.S., we send our best wishes, and also to D. A. Burns, who becomes Superintendent, Home Missions for the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec.

Congo. We take liberty to quote from a letter received from Gordon Pearce, who, together with J. Tweedley, has been visiting our Congo stations: "We have been given a great welcome as we have visited churches, schools, hospitals, speaking with native pastors and with our missionaries and preaching on Sundays. I have listened to so many addresses of welcome that I feel something between a Lord Mayor and a royal personage. Congregations are anything more than 700, and I assisted at the baptism of twenty-seven candidates. Christian work here is most impressive and full of encouragement. To be in church with so many dark-skinned folk, with their flashing eyes and shining teeth, still more to be at the Communion service with them, is a wonderful experience." Supporters of our Missionary Society may well thank God for this spiritual interest resulting from the investment of their capital. Congo "Pools" are the best!

GUIDANCE FOR THE WILLING

I give and bequeath to my Executors the sum of — upon Trust, that they pay the same, free of Legacy Duty, to the Treasurer of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship, to be applied to the carrying on of the work of the Fellowship in such ways as the Committee may decide. For such Legacy the receipt of the Treasurer will be a sufficient discharge.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Lord's Supper. A Baptist Statement. The Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd. 56 pp. 2s. 6d. net.

This important statement has been prepared by the Principals of our Colleges at the request of the Baptist Union. The sub-committee responsible was under the chairmanship of the late Principal P. W. Evans, and the statement is edited by Principal R. L. Child. It is an important and useful document and one that should be carefully studied by ministers, by ministers' fraternals and (may we suggest) by church meetings. Its primary purpose appears to be domestic, "in order that our churches may have some guidance on this very important matter." Because of this it is limited in its treatment and it is hoped that some time our Principals might go on to give a fuller treatment of this subject which will commend itself, more than this can do, to scholars and enquirers of other communions who are desirous of knowing the Baptist doctrine and practice of the Lord's Supper.

After a brief introduction which in the main records the Baptist statement of the Doctrine of the Church and Sacraments published by the Baptist Union Council in 1948, the booklet describes Baptist Practice and the Interpretation they give to the service. Both in practice and interpretation there is wide diversity among Baptists, and those who look for a single directive of observance or of meaning will be disappointed. It is a salutary reminder that Baptists, no less than the Church of England, are divided in doctrine, interpretation and practice so that (as the report puts it), "we have no right to criticise other denominations which are not able to authorise immediate intercommunion." The statement proceeds to discuss certain practical issues, such as the relation of the Lord's Supper to Church membership; "Open" and "Closed" Communion; Occasional Observances; and Broadcasting the Communion, about which it is stated, "We cannot think it right to sacrifice the primary purpose of the Communion Service (i.e. a covenant-rite of the gathered Church), in the interests of persons who are not present." The last part of the statement on the actual administration deserves particularly careful study. Many Churches have slipped into unworthy ways of celebrating the Lord's Supper and it is not surprising that if little is made of it few attend. A reconsideration of our ways of administration based upon a re-thinking of our theology of the Sacrament may well be one of the major advances that Baptists could make.

A few minor points: the statements of interpretation given on pages 17-18 do not seem sufficient or satisfactory, though there is further amplification later on. The note on page 39 regarding occasional observances should have been either amplified and explained more fully or left out.

Out of the Clouds. By Zevi Ben Avraham. Obtainable from Biblical Research Society (Australasia), 26, Spring Road, Coulfield South, S.E.8, Victoria, Australia.

A lively piece of apologetic for the conversion of members of the Jewish faith written by one of our Australian members, Dr. Duff Forbes, in which the promise, the coming, the character, the work and the Person of the Messiah are proved from the Old Testament and other Jewish writings in an imaginary conversation between two travellers by airplane on their way to Israel.

W.W.B.

The Church of the New Testament. By L. G. Champion. 135 pages. 7s. 6d. Carey Kingsgate Press.

This book is based upon lectures given to a conference of European Baptist ministers at Rushlikon in 1950. It bears evidence of the scholarship we should expect from the new Tutor of Bristol College. Written as a "straightforward account, in plain language,

of the life of the New Testament Church," it is without footnotes, quotations and other external signs of the academic approach. This is the strength of the book. It is the work of a man whose gifts have been in the service of a busy pastorate, and as the New Testament in its origin was largely pastoral, the reviewer feels the author gets to the heart of it. The book is deceptively simple, as it draws out the great basic themes. It has real depth. One likes Dr. Champion's insistence on "life" and "relationship" as two main New Testament notes, and he is not afraid of linking the Synoptic teaching with the Johannine.

The book deserves a wide circulation. It would make an excellent start for Bible study by Sunday School teachers, lay preachers and intelligent young people. All ministers would profit from working through it and reflecting on the spiritual experiences from which the life of the New Testament flowed. I have quarried some sermons out of it.

C.S.H.

ADDENDA

Two other honoured brethren have died—R. W. Cameron, after long illness, and Dennis Wilkinson, suddenly. We thank God for them and remember, in prayer, the bereaved.

Further ministerial changes include: John Paterson, Stratford-on-Avon; W. Driskell, Southfields; A. B. Light, Dr. Barnardo's Homes. E. H. Owen has closed his useful ministry because of ill-health. He has our warm sympathy.

Dr. Jarvis, President-General, Australian B.U., is making many friends in Britain; we are glad to have him with us. Another Australian visitor, H. P. E. Bunday, is expected during the summer. New appointments: E. C. Burleigh, Principal of the College in South Australia, and E. E. Watson, of Victoria, Home-Mission Superintendent, Tasmania.

The Magazine. We are indebted to Dr. Crabtree for a series of articles written by the Faculty of Rüschlikon, Zurich, for the July issue, and also to J. O. Barrett and his colleagues, for the production of the present number.

The B.U. Council has nominated Dr. T. G. Dunning as an Honorary Member of the Baptist Union—a distinction seldom awarded. Dr. Hugh Martin is to be President of the Free Church Federal Council. To both we tender congratulations on well-deserved honours.

The S.C.M. Press has recently published two Missionary Plays (1s.): "The Awakening of Shanti-Ma," by H. and M. Limb, and "Active Service," by Walter Bottoms. We warmly commend.

"The Beatitudes," by Hugh Martin (5s.) is an outstanding volume. The author probes beneath the surface of the familiar words and uncovers the deeper meaning that applies to modern life. A beautiful spirit pervades the book and many readers will want to deliver another course of sermons on the old, but ever new, theme.

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